



Policy Control	
Policy Name	Complaints Handling Policy
Policy Owner	Chief Operating Officer
Version No.	2
Approved by Chief Executive	Yes
Date of Implementation	June 2024
Date of Last Review	June 2024
Date of Next Review	June 2025
Published on Website	No

## **1.0 – Introduction**

1.1 - We want to hear about occasions where we have not met our service standards. Our customers can advise us if we do not meet their expectations as soon as possible so that we can put things right and learn from any mistakes the Association has made. We will deal with all complaints quickly, justly, effectively and as far as is reasonably possible, to the satisfaction of the person who has lodged the complaint.

## **2.0 – What is a complaint?**

2.1 - Complaints are unlike everyday enquiries such as reporting repairs, rent enquiries or reporting anti-social behaviour issues. These types of enquiries are not covered by our complaints policy but are covered by individual service areas' policies and procedures and these are available on request.

2.2 – A complaint within the Association's policy is defined as 'any dissatisfaction about something we have or have not done, or the standard of service we have provided or someone else has provided on our behalf, where an initial response was not satisfactory'.

2.3 - We treat multiple complaints by the same customer as a single complaint.

## **3.0 – Who can complain?**

3.1 - A complaint can be made by any person or group of people affected by an activity or service provided by the Association, including

3.1.1 - Current tenants/licensees and members of their households

3.1.2 - Former tenants/licensees

3.1.3 - Housing applicants

3.1.4 - MPs and Councillors

3.1.5 - Advocates of the complainant such as friends, relatives or other representatives (written consent from the complainant is required)

## **3.2 – Exceptions**

3.2.1 - There are some situations where we will not take a formal complaint. However, in some of these circumstances we may investigate internally to ensure we continue to provide the best possible service. When we decide not to accept a complaint, we will provide an explanation setting out the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process. Customers have the right to challenge this decision by making an approach to the Housing Ombudsman

Such circumstances include:

3.2.1.1- Anonymous complaints

3.2.1.2 -Complaints raised on behalf of a customer without their authority

3.2.1.3 - Complaints that have previously been fully investigated in-line with this policy

3.2.1.4 - Complaints that have previously been fully investigated in-line with this policy

3.2.1.5 - Where you are asking for clarity of our policies and procedures

3.2.1.6 – Complaints about a policy itself

- 3.2.1.7 - Insurance claims, these will be handed to our insurers or our Insurance Team
- 3.2.1.8 - Where the issue took place more than 12 months ago
- 3.2.1.9 - Service charges/rent (We will accept complaints about the quality or frequency of work paid for via service charges)
- 3.2.1.10 - Where we have special arrangements in place with a customer, in line with our Unreasonable Behaviour Policy
- 3.2.1.11 - Complaints which are being pursued in an unreasonable manner including frivolous or vexatious complaints

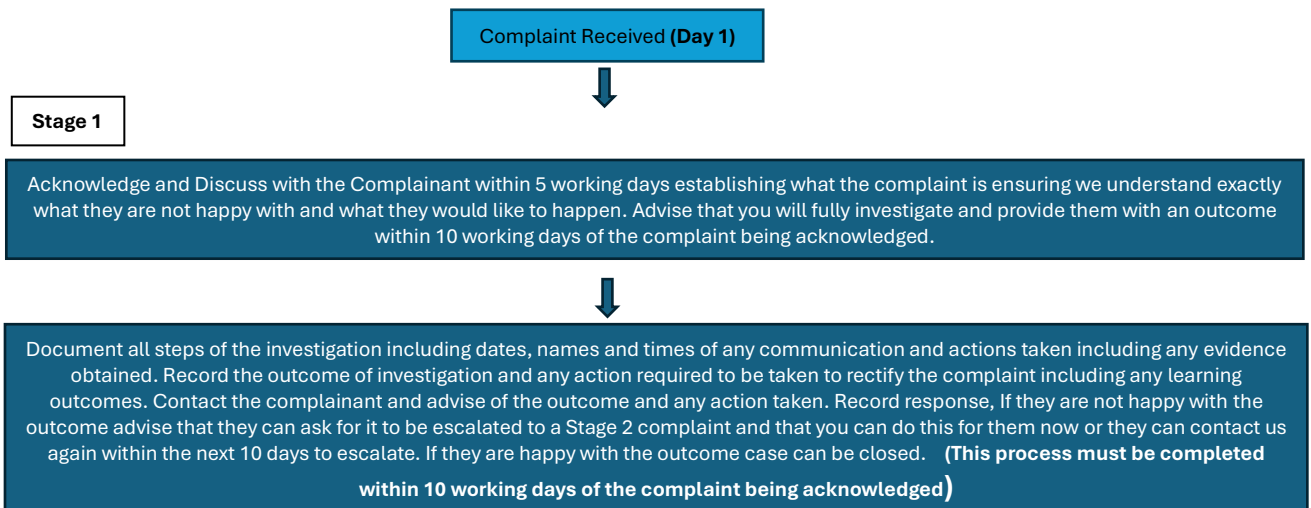
3.3 - If you are struggling to make your complaint and would like help to do so, we have detailed actions and support measures, to ensure that it's easy to make a complaint, extra support is provided where needed. Please contact us for more information.

#### 4.0 – Complaints Stages and Process

##### Complaint Stages

<p><b>Early resolution</b> (The first time they have contacted us about the issue, and we have successfully resolved)</p> <p><b>Complaints handlers have the training and authority to resolve at this stage.</b></p>	<p><b>Stage One</b> (They have contacted us more than once about the issue, they weren't happy about previous action/they shared their dissatisfaction and wanted to make a complaint)</p> <p><b>Complaints handlers have the training and authority to resolve at this stage and have access to the team supervisor to discuss more complex cases.</b></p>	<p><b>Stage Two</b> (Early resolution and stage one has failed to reach a resolution the complainant is not happy with outcome and they have requested a review within 20 days of outcome) <b>All stage 2 complaints are handler by the department manager who will consult with SLT.</b></p>	<p><b>Ombudsman</b> (Should only get here when all internal stages have failed but be prepared that it may be the first we know about them not being happy)</p>
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##### Complaints process



**Stage 2**

Completed by department manager. Acknowledge receipt of the escalation of the complaint within 5 working days of request being received, and furthermore discuss with the complainant to understand what outcome they are looking for. Review stage one completing the actions on the complaint form for Stage 2. Record the outcome of review/ further investigation and update the complainant of the outcome (upheld or new outcome) If they are still not happy with the outcome advise that next steps for them would be the housing ombudsman as internally, we have completed all actions and are unable to resolve to a level they deem satisfactory. Provide details of housing ombudsman and close case as unable to agree resolution. **(This process must be completed within 20 working days of the complaint being acknowledged at stage 2)** [Home | Housing Ombudsman Service \(housing-ombudsman.org.uk\)](http://housing-ombudsman.org.uk)

## 5.0

### 5.1 - Our complaints process has three stages

#### 4.1.1 - Stage 1

Your complaint will be allocated to a complaint's handler. We will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within 5 working days, you will be advised who is dealing with your complaint and when you can expect a full response from us. We aim to provide you with a full written response, or response in a format acceptable to you or your appointed representative within 10 working days of the complaint being acknowledged. Sometimes it will take us longer to provide a response to you. Any extension will be no longer than 10 working days unless in exceptional circumstances which will be clearly explained in writing, and the ombudsman contact details will be provided with it.

#### 4.1.2 - Stage 2

This stage deals with complaints that have not been resolved at stage 1, will be allocated to the department manager and will be our final response. When using stage 2 we will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within 5 working days of the escalation request being received, and furthermore discuss your complaint with you to understand why you remain dissatisfied and how we can resolve this. We aim to give you a full response to the complaint as soon as possible and within 20 working days. If our investigation will take longer than 20 working days, we will tell you. Any extension will be no longer than 20 working days unless in exceptional circumstances which will be clearly explained in writing, and the ombudsman contact details will be provided with it.

#### 4.1.3 – Stage 3

If your complaint has been considered at both stages and you are still not satisfied with the outcome, the Ombudsman (the Commissioner for Complaints) may consider a complaint for you.

4.1.3.1 - The Ombudsman will only consider complaints that have already been through the full internal complaint procedure.

4.1.3.2 - The Ombudsman is completely independent of Reliance and Reliance will co-operate fully in the course of any investigation carried out by the Ombudsman.

4.1.3.3 – The Ombudsman contact details are  
Housing Ombudsman Service, 81 Aldwych, London WC2B 4HN  
0300 111 3000

[info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk)

## **6.0 - How to make a complaint to the Association**

5.1 - We are happy to receive your complaint in a variety of ways to suit you. You can log a complaint by:

- 5.1.1 - Calling us
- 5.1.2 - Visiting us in person
- 5.1.3 - Emailing or writing to us
- 5.1.4 - Our online website contact form

## **7.0 – Learning from Complaints**

6.1 - We want to learn from our customer complaints as this helps us improve our services. Once the complaint has been closed, we will contact tenants to ask for views on how we handled the complaint along with their view on the outcome of the complaint. We have internal systems in place to make sure we learn from complaints and use this information to improve services.

## **8.0 – Confidentiality**

7.1 - Names will not be made known to other parties, whether in proceedings relating to the complaint or not, unless it is necessary to assist in reaching a mutually acceptable resolution. We will ensure our duty of confidentiality is observed when dealing with the information you have given us in connection with your complaint.

7.2 - However, if your complaint involves another tenant or a member of staff, a fair appraisal of the events will not be possible without talking to that person. Without this, the chances of reaching a satisfactory resolution to your concerns will be much reduced.

Appendix 1

**Complaint Record**

(complete when made aware of a concern or complaint and throughout our internal process)

RSH case handler	
Department and job title	
Concern/complaint reference number	

**Complainants Details**

Name:	
Relation/position (tenant, neighbour, MP, BCC)	
Contact details:	
Property concern/complaint is relating to.	
MA concern/complaint is relating to	
Is this the first time you have contact RSH about this issue/concern	

**Concern/Complaint Details**

(This should be captured and completed at the first point of contact or within a maximum of 5 working days)

Date	Time	Source T/C , Text, Email,
What are you not happy with? (complete with factual information that is provided using the complainants' words ensuring you confirm your understanding of each issue they want to raise)		
What is the desired Outcome/Resolution for each issue? Advise of your expected conclusion time scale and that this will be within 10 working days.		

**Action Taken To Investigate**

(You have a maximum of 9 working days to complete this process, if this is going to take longer ensure this is communicated with the resident using the relevant letter template.)

Record all details of what you have done inclusive of names, times and dates of who you have spoken to and what has been agreed, attach any emails or correspondence.

Outcome from investigation (concern/complaint upheld, remedial action taken to rectify, unsubstantiated evidence to prove this, require escalation to other services such as safeguarding?)

Learning Outcomes for RSH and/or MA

**Outcome communicated to resident and their feedback gained.**

(You have a maximum of 10 working days to do this from when complaint was acknowledged)

Detail date, time, how and what was communicated and how many working days it has been since the complaint was received. **(YOU MUST ADVISE THE RESIDENT OF THEIR OPTION TO ESCALATE IF THEY ARE NOT HAPPY WITH YOUR OUTCOME?)**

Any further involvement or actions required of Reliance or managing agent (if yes please provide details and do not close case until this is a no, ensure resident is kept up to date and advised once actions have been completed.)

Date concern/complaint closed (early resolution and stage one only)	
Name and job title	

**Stage of Concern/Complaint**

<b>Early resolution</b> (The first time they have contacted us about the issue and we have successfully resolved)	<b>Stage One</b> (They have contacted us more than once about the issue, they weren't happy about previous action/they state I want to make a complaint)	<b>Stage Two</b> ( <u>Early resolution and stage one has failed to reach a resolution the complainant is not happy with outcome, and they have requested a review within 10 days of outcome</u> )	<b>Ombudsman</b> (Should only get here when all internal stages have failed but be prepared that it may be the first we know about them not being happy)

Case escalated to (name, job title, date)	
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**Escalation To Stage2**

**Stage 2 Complaint**

**Review of Stage One Record**

Contact resident to understand what their desired outcome is within 5 days of the escalation being received. Review stage one, has it been fully completed, is any further information/investigation required. Record all details of what you have done inclusive of names, times and dates of who you have spoken to and what has been agreed, attach any emails or correspondence.



Outcome from Review/ further investigation Does this information change the previous outcomes or require any additional action from RSH and MA? **(This needs to be completed within 19 days of the escalation request if this is going to take longer ensure this is communicated with the resident using the relevant letter template.)**

Learning Outcomes for RSH and/or MA

**Outcome communicated to customer and their feedback gained.**

**(You have a maximum of 20 working days to do this from when complaint escalated)**

Detail date, time, how and what was communicated and how many working days it has been since the complaint was escalated. Also include further action that can be taken if still not happy with the outcome which would now be the ombudsman.

Date stage 2 closed	
Name and job title	
Signature	